WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for treating a neutrophil-associated pulmonary disease comprising locally administering to the respiratory tract of an afflicted human an amount of a therapeutic preparation comprising a topical anesthetic effective to counteract the symptoms of the disease, wherein the topical anesthetic is an aminoalkylbenzoate..

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the therapeutic preparation is administered in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable liquid vehicle.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the therapeutic preparation is administered by spraying or by nebulization.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the topical anesthetic is administered at a daily dose of about 2.0-15 m/kg.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the topical anesthetic is an ester between a carboxylic acid of the general formula:

$$(R^2)(R^3)ArCO_2H,$$

wherein Ar is C_6H_3 and each R^2 and R^3 is H, halo, $(R^1)(H)N$-, wherein R^1 is $(C_1 - C_5)$alkyl, H_2N-, or $(C_2 - C_5)$alkoxy; and an alcohol of the general formula:

$$(R^4)(R^5)N(X)OH$$

wherein X is a $(C_1 - C_5)$ branched-or straight-chain alkylene; R^4 is H or $(C_1 - C_4)$alkyl, R^5 is $(C_1 - C_4)$alkyl, or R^4 and R^5 taken together can be a 5- or 6-membered heterocycloalkiphatic ring, optionally substituted by $(C_1$ -

C_3)alkyl or comprising an additional ring O- or N-atom; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the topical anesthetic is an aminoalkylbenzoate or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the topical anesthetic is procaine, chloroprocaine, dyclonine, tetracaine, benoxinate, proparacaine, meprylcaine, piperocaine, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the neutrophil-associated pulmonary disease is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), chronic bronchitis (CB), cystic fibrosis, α-1 anti-trypsin deficiency, pulmonary emphysema, adult respiratory distress syndrome, or idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.